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# *The University of Dayton*

## *News Release*

March 24, 1993

Contact: Pam Huber

### **TREASONOUS WORLD WAR II TOKYO ROSE ONLY A FIGMENT**

DAYTON, Ohio — Tokyo Rose, that treasonous siren who broadcast gloom and doom to Allied forces in the Pacific during World War II, is only a myth, says an expert in World War II radio propaganda. The woman arrested and tried in her place was a Japanese-American zoologist caught in Japan when the war broke out.

"A lot of American servicemen in the South Pacific would have sworn they listened to Tokyo Rose every night," says Philip Harwood, associate professor of communication at the University of Dayton. "But that was an idea that was concocted in the minds of the GIs."

Harwood will present "Tokyo Rose: The Myth and the Reality" at the combined convention for the Popular Culture Association and the American Culture Association April 7-10 in New Orleans.

The Japanese military did develop a propaganda plot to dampen Allied morale by using prisoners for radio broadcasts. The English prisoner put in charge of the effort drafted help from English-speaking Iva Toguri d'Aquino, a Japanese-American who had graduated from UCLA with a zoology degree. D'Aquino was stranded in Japan when Pearl Harbor was bombed, and she had found work as a typist at NHK, a Japanese broadcasting company.

"But she had a gritty, rough voice," says Harwood. "The producer was trying to sabotage the whole project." When she appeared on air "she'd spin records and talk a bit in a

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very entertaining and innocuous 15-minute program," he says. She called herself Orphan Annie, and U.S. servicemen liked her.

The legendary treason of Tokyo Rose was so pervasive that, when the war ended, such U.S. figures as Walter Winchell and J. Edgar Hoover called for her arrest. Even though the attorney general admitted there was no case against her, d'Aquino was brought to trial on eight counts of treason. "It was just one complete, botched-up mess," says Harwood. D'Aquino was convicted of one count of treason, fined \$10,000 and sentenced to 10 years in jail. She had served six years when she won parole in 1955. She received a pardon years later from President Gerald Ford.

"You can listen to the existing tapes of her show and hear that she didn't say anything treasonous," Harwood says. Racism against the Japanese during and after the war contributed to her "unconscionable treatment," he says, although her own actions directly after the war didn't help. "Maybe she was basking in the notoriety and didn't realize the long-term implications, but she signed 'Tokyo Rose' to an interview she had done just after the war," says Harwood. "That was a foolish move on her part."

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** For media interviews, call Philip Harwood at UD at (513) 229-2422 or at home at (513) 298-1715. Harwood is a resident of Dayton.